



Public Involvement Plan

Project: Countywide Zoning Project – Phase I

The Countywide Zoning Work Plan Overview establishes the need to create a more detailed Public Involvement Plan (PIP) tailored to the countywide zoning process. The PIP will achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide an overall framework for public involvement in the countywide zoning project, particularly for Phase I
2. Identify tools for disseminating and collecting information
3. Identify planning areas within Ravalli County (based on school district boundaries) that will need to be integrally involved in the planning process
4. Provide a detailed outline of the public involvement opportunities throughout the process

Some general questions to think about for the public involvement plan:

What is the best way to involve the public?

How do we reach the widest segment of the public?

What is the best, most efficient, and effective way to gather information? Present information?

When will the expertise of a professional facilitator be of most use?

Section 1. Public Involvement Overview

1. Develop the public involvement plan
 - a. Meet with interested members of the Planning Board and public to generate ideas, develop the public involvement plan and develop initial contacts in each planning area
 - b. Make initial contact with community leaders in each planning area
 - c. Identify and work with public process consultant to refine the public involvement plan
 - d. Conduct initial meetings to help generate and sort through ideas for public involvement "best practices" in Ravalli County
 - e. "Shop" a draft plan to practicing planners across the state, local facilitators and other local leaders for their input
2. Introductory public meetings – several meetings to be held in different communities, which will be supplemented by a series of presentations throughout the valley given at various community organization meetings/events (e.g. Kiwanis, Rotary Club, Right to Farm and Ranch Board, Park Board, Land Trust, Chamber of Commerce, Bitterroot Valley Board of Realtors, Bitterroot Building Association, Parent-Teacher Association meetings, Main Street Associations, Lions, Soroptimists, civic clubs, Economic Development Authority, Republican party groups, Bitterrooters for Planning, political parties, church groups, etc.)

Provide general countywide zoning project information and solicit feedback

- Inform interested members of the public about the project and how it is proposed to achieve goals and objectives of the Ravalli County Growth Policy as well as address the interim zoning
- Discuss proposed public involvement plan for the project
- Ask for feedback regarding the scope and approach of the countywide zoning project
- Identify people who want to be involved and how they want to be involved
- Discuss potential regulatory framework
- Discuss proposed land capability and suitability analysis

3. Work sessions/workshops about proposed zoning regulation framework
 - a. Overview about different ways to use zoning and the proposal for the Phase 1/Phase 2 approach for Ravalli County
 - b. Provide overview of proposed regulatory framework (go over the proposed districts)
 - c. Discuss and collect feedback on the proposed set of districts
 - d. Information used to revise proposed regulations and decide whether additional methods of soliciting public input is necessary
4. Work sessions about land capability and suitability analysis
 - a. Planning staff presents data and their analysis of the data showing areas of the county that are relatively more or less suitable for different kinds/levels of development
 - b. Discussion topic: Is the analysis generally accurate in identifying areas suitable and not so suitable for development

Comment [s1]: Again, it's been discussed that we should change this term....

- c. Information used to modify the land capability and suitability analysis and decide whether additional methods of soliciting public input is necessary
5. Create the zoning map
- a. Work sessions with small groups to test methods for applying the proposed zoning districts to the land capability analysis. Decide whether an initial draft zoning map will be developed by a smaller group *who?* and used as the starting point in each community for public involvement in developing the final zoning map, or if the initial drafts will be developed as part of the public process, or some other strategy is employed.
 - b. Hold meetings/work sessions to develop a zoning map in one area of the County (pilot project)
 - c. Evaluate the process/outcome and amend the process, as necessary
 - d. Continue to review and refine the zoning map for the first community
 - e. Develop zoning maps for the remaining planning areas in the County
 - f. Continue to review and refine the zoning maps for all planning areas, as necessary
6. Formal legal adoption process*
- a. Preparation of public release draft regulations, zoning map, etc.
 - b. Advertisement and release of draft
 - c. Collect written comments
 - d. Planning Board public hearing, deliberations, recommendation
 - e. BCC public hearing, deliberations, adoption of resolution of intent

* at any time the Planning Board or Commissioners may ask to slow the formal process to allow for additional steps such as collecting additional comments, staff preparation of amendments, time for additional consideration by the board(s), etc.

Section 2. Key Tools for Disseminating and Collecting Information

Identify and work with Community Leaders

To identify key Community Leaders, a public meeting will be held in each of the identified planning areas (See Section 3 "Planning Area"). The Planning Department will seek individuals with a strong commitment to the planning process and who will remain dependable and reliable throughout the countywide zoning process.

Community Leaders may be members of a local board or committee, such as a school board, local grassroots group, or civic club. Community Leaders may also be citizens who are generally interested in this project for whatever reason and who are also well connected to their community and interested in relaying information about the project.

Some Community Leaders may serve as representatives of their community on smaller committees. Community Leaders should be distributed about their planning area to the greatest extent feasible to avoid a geographical monopoly of the process. They should have some level of experience in facilitating group discussion, communicating potentially complex information, identifying necessary project related resources, and building consensus through public participation.

Identification Process

How are these people identified? Do we hold meetings for the specific purpose of finding them, or allow them to surface through the course of other meetings?

These individuals may 'self select' through the course of the zoning process – i.e they exhibit a greater ability and desire to participate in the public process.

Comment [s2]: It worked well in Corvallis for staff to attend a broad-based, politically neutral group meeting (in this case, the civic club), where everyone came to a consensus as to who should be represented on their committee.

Identify and Establish Planning Committees

Planning committees will be established in each planning area. Each Planning Committee will be composed only of people who live within their respective planning area and can represent various interests. In many cases, members of Planning Committees may also be considered community leaders. These committees will help develop and review ideas, documents and maps when smaller groups are needed to work on portions of the countywide zoning project. They will also help to disseminate information about the project and ways people can be involved as the project progresses.

What is the best way to create these committees? Hold meetings for the sole purpose of establishing a PC? Allow the committees to form 'spontaneously'? How can we avoid a fractious process in the establishment of these committees? How can we encourage a broad cross section of the community to be involved in these committees?

Comment [s3]: See above comments. I guess that illustrates my confusion as to the difference between the Community Leaders and the Planning Committee members. I thought they were one and the same. If indeed they were one and the same, it would simplify your process. If these are to remain two separate entities, maybe clarify the "function" of the community leaders, as you've done here.

Function of Planning Committee

The planning committee serves as a direct liaison between interested citizens in the planning area and the County Planning Department/Planning Board. The PC has the following primary responsibilities:

- Help facilitate meetings
- Create and advise on preferred public outreach methods for their planning area
- Disseminate information to their community

- Share valuable information with other Planning Committees
- Report committee findings to the Planning Department and Planning Board

Three options for planning committees: (1) Composed of representatives from area boards (school, fire, civic club, etc.) (2) Composed of a limited number of self-selected individuals from the community. (3) Some combination of the two options.

*How formal shall these planning committees be? (i.e., establish bylaws? Take minutes? Etc..)
What degree of autonomy should PC's enjoy? Are PC's the best approach?*

2.1 Option 1.

Each planning committee may include as a baseline the following individuals:

- Representatives from the local fire district
- Representatives from the local school district
- The planning board member(s) representing that community

Because the community structure within each planning area is different, each district may wish to include other committee members.

2.2 Option 2. As public forums are held, some individuals may demonstrate a greater willingness to be active participants in the process. These self-selecting people may elect to form the foundation of the Planning Committee for their area.

Will we find a sufficient number of self selecting individuals?

2.3 Option 3. The most desirable option may be a combination of the two described above. If an insufficient number of self selecting individuals surface, they may be replaced by a member of a school board, for instance.

Disseminate Information

Below are a number of possible ways to disseminate information to the public. No method is perfect or will work in all cases. Evaluating the target audience and the goals of the participation process will help planners choose the best combination of methods to publicize information. Methods used should be based on the scope, scale, timeframe, resources available, and advice of interested citizens from the affected communities.

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

Advantages: A 'low technology' option for citizens who may not have access to online sources. Is generally widely distributed and a place citizens traditionally look for information regarding public processes.

Disadvantages: Effectiveness will depend on readership and distribution. May be expensive to place ad. Information will have a limited number of printings to be read by public.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Comment [s4]: (Corvallis, Corvallis, Corvallis...) For Corvallis, we proposed that the committee would adopt "rules" or "guidelines" but not necessarily formal "bylaws." A similar thing is being proposed for the Streamside Setback Committee. These committees would make the final decisions on what the local proposal would be – they would "authorize" the proposed regulations and map and make other critical decisions on the way – it puts the control in local hands, rather than coming down from our ivory tower. Therefore, their rules should at least explain what constitutes a quorum and what type of vote (majority, supermajority, etc.) is required on various types of decisions; whether they'll have a chairman and how they'll elect him/her; how they'll replace or dismiss members, etc. Now that I think about it, I'm not sure how that's different from bylaws.

Comment [s5]: And what if the self-selecting individuals are people like Phil Taylor and Chris Linkenhoker, who might have a difficult time building broad-based consensus?

Comment [s6]: Sort of related to your question above, perhaps this plan should account for a situation in which nobody (or nobody reliable and competent) steps up to man one or more local committees. This would be a really sad scenario, but it could happen in a sparsely populated place like Darby/Sula. Or a committee might form and fizzle out. Would Planning staff just do the work for them? The Planning Board? The LUSC?

Advantages: A 'low technology' option for citizens who may not have access to online sources. Is generally widely distributed and a place citizens traditionally look for information regarding public processes. A free method of disseminating information.

Disadvantages: Effectiveness will depend on readership and distribution. Information will only have one printing to be read by public.

RADIO/TELEVISION

See sample press release.

Advantages: A 'low technology' option for citizens who may not have access to online sources. Will reach a large audience, depending on time of broadcast and popularity of station. Announcements can be focused to a more specific audience. Stations may broadcast announcements for free as a public service.

Disadvantages: Will be expensive if time has to be paid for. Free 'public service' broadcasts will likely be made during a low listening/viewing period. Is a one time announcement.

TELEPHONE HOTLINES

A telephone hotline, with recorded information, can be a way for planners to announce up-to-date information, answer common questions, and/or receive comment without having to take time throughout the day to answer questions one by one.

Comment [s7]: If it's going to be in the proposal, we might want to make sure we have the time and resources to establish and maintain this kind of thing.

Advantages: A 'low technology' option for citizens who may not have access to online sources. Can be updated as often as there is new news. Can serve to answer common questions, such as meeting times or deadlines, freeing up the time of planners.

Disadvantages: Need to have infrastructure to support a telephone hotline. Telephone number and content of hotline must be widely published and provided to the target audience. Must be kept up-to-date, otherwise people will stop using the resource.

Comment [s8]: Same as above

NEWSLETTERS

Advantages: Can be distributed electronically and/or by mail to reach a pre-identified interested group of public on a regular basis. Can include major events as well as more everyday happenings. Is most effective when distributed on a regular basis.

Disadvantages: Can be expensive to print and mail. Larger newsletters, with pictures and articles by multiple authors, can take significant staff time to compile and edit.

WEBSITES/BLOGS, ETC.

- Advantages:** Can be updated as often as there is new news. Dissemination is immediate. Can serve to answer common questions, such as meeting times or deadlines, freeing up the time of planners. Can be used to host an online forum for the public to discuss issues amongst themselves.
- Disadvantages:** Will only be available to public with knowledge and access to the internet. Website address and content of the site must be widely published and provided to the target audience. Must be kept up-to-date, otherwise people will stop using the resource.

E-MAIL

- Advantages:** An easy way to communicate with and track public comments. Dissemination is immediate.
- Disadvantages:** Will only be available to public with knowledge of and access to the internet.

PRINT MAIL

- Advantages:** A more traditional, "official" way to disseminate information. Is a 'low technology' option for citizens who may not have access to online sources. Can be used to reach a specific audience whose contact information is already available to the planner.
- Disadvantages:** Can be expensive and time consuming to print and mail.

INFORMAL NETWORKS

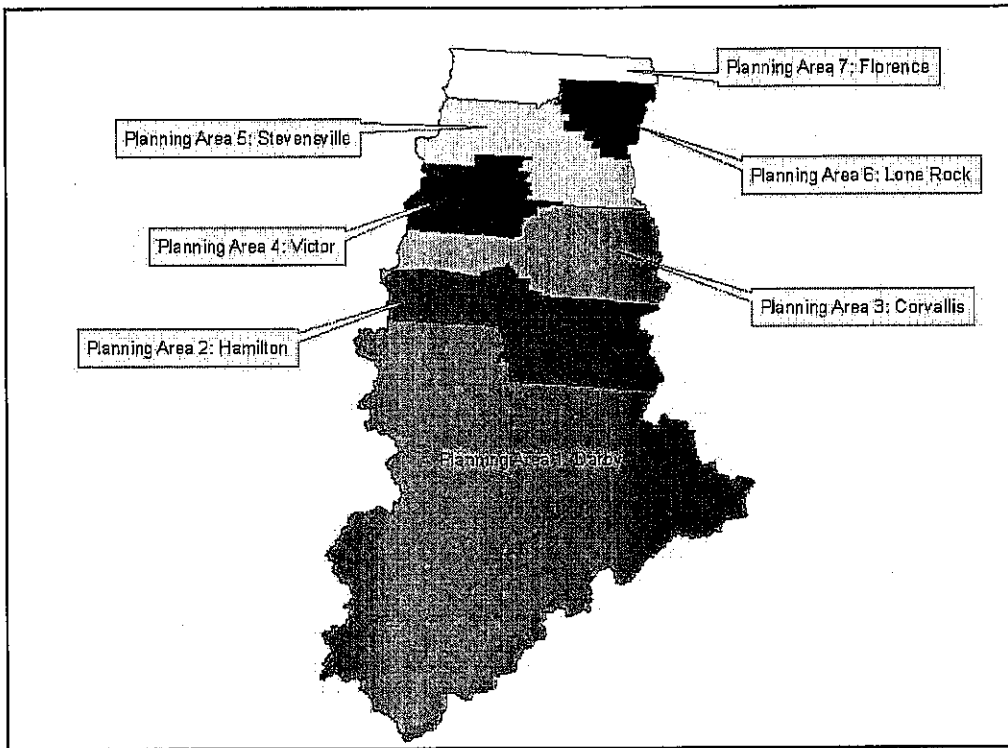
Informal networks are important means by which citizens share information and form conclusions about issues in their community. Informal networks typically have no hierarchy or formal structure; they are often simple gatherings of individuals who share common interests – for example, a group of cattle ranchers who meet each week for coffee.

- Advantages:** People may feel more at ease to express opinions and share information. Can be used to develop workable alternatives and build grassroots support for the project
- Disadvantages:** It can be difficult to identify and reach informal networks, and can be time-consuming in the early stages of public involvement.

Section 3. Planning Areas

Each planning committee will be in charge of activities in their respective planning area. School district boundaries shall be construed to form the planning area. See Map 1. The planning areas are:

- Darby
- Hamilton
- Corvallis
- Victor
- Stevensville
- Florence



Map 1. Ravalli County Planning Areas
Source: Ravalli County Planning Department

Section 4. Details of Public Involvement Meetings

Idea: we could develop a flow chart of the entire process and include it in the plan then as we use it in presentations and at meetings we can add a "you are here" arrow to it so people can see where we have been and where we have yet to go as we move through this big process... Maybe this really belongs in Section 1?

Comment [s9]: Great idea

To initiate a comprehensive zoning program for Ravalli County, the citizenry must be informed of the actions proposed by their governing body. To accomplish this task, the Planning Department and Planning Board will host a series of valley-wide meetings. Three phases of meetings are proposed for the initial kick-off: informational sessions, zoning overview workshops and land suitability workshops. This initial set three rounds of meetings will be followed by working sessions for Planning Committee members who will be involved in testing ideas for how to develop zoning maps once the zoning regulations and the land suitability analysis are completed. This will then be followed by rounds of public meetings in each planning area that are focused on developing the countywide zoning map. It is assumed that as maps are developed they will need to be reviewed and revised at the community level until they are ready for formal consideration by the Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners. Once the final drafts of the zoning map, zoning regulations and any other documents needing adoption are completed, the formal public hearing and adoption process will commence.

Preparation for Countywide Zoning

First round of meetings: Informational

Planning staff proposes three informational meetings, which are open to all interested citizens and organizations. The meetings are proposed for the last week of February and the first two weeks of March.

Purpose: Provide basic zoning information and get feedback on it.

Goals: Educate the citizenry to the best extent possible so they are prepared for further action. We want people to understand the general outline for the zoning process, when they will be able to submit information, how it can be submitted, how it will be used.

Format: Two 1 to 2 hour meetings on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday night, and one on a Saturday afternoon. "Unilateral" presentation from a combination of staff, PB, and key community leaders. Leave time at the end to answer questions and have short discussion. Place emphasis on second round of upcoming meetings which will be more in-depth and participatory?.

The informational meetings shall:

1. Explain why we are doing the Countywide Zoning Project and what we hope to accomplish
 - a. Describe the relationship between permanent zoning and the interim zoning
 - b. Describe the relationship between permanent zoning and the Ravalli County Growth Policy
2. Provide a baseline report on the project to date

Comment [s10]: See the "Timeline 011407.doc" file under the Long Range/Corvallis folder. We got positive feedback on that and were advised to keep doing things like this. Among other advantages, it provides an argument against people who say "there were never any opportunities for us to get involved."

- a. What has been accomplished
 - b. What is being done
 - c. What is proposed
 - d. Explain the Planning Department's zoning work plan and timeline
3. Explain the Public Involvement Plan (PIP)
4. Provide an overview about zoning including what state law requires county zoning regulations to address
5. Describe the different proposed planning areas
6. Describe the proposal to create Planning Committees (PC) and what their role would be
7. Ask for feedback regarding scope and approach for countywide zoning project

Tools:

The PowerPoint presentation, entitled "Zoning Informational Meeting" should be used to aid presenters at these meetings.

Materials needed:

- Computer
- Projector
- Easel
- Sample zoning maps (Lake + Ada Counties)
- Copies of applicable documents
- Poster paper and pens
- Proper staffing
- Power cords

Roles and Responsibilities:

Presentations: John Lavey → Zoning Informational Meeting PowerPoint
 Facilitators: Allen Bjergo (Florence) and Kit Sutherland (Darby and Hamilton)
 Advertising: Planning Contact email, flyers, word-of-mouth
 Logistics: Schedule venues, get the word out.
 Documentation of Meeting Results: Use Public Comment Tracker
 Follow-up work, if necessary: Debrief with facilitator, amend meeting as appropriate

First phase proposed schedule:

- 1st Informational meeting: Wednesday, March 7, 2007 Florence Gym 7:00pm
- 2nd Informational meeting: Wednesday, March 14, 2007 Darby Clubhouse 7:00pm
- 3rd Informational meeting: Wednesday, March 21, 2007 Hamilton (First Interstate Bldg) 7:00pm

Second round of meetings: Zoning Overview

When the informational meetings conclude, a second round of meetings should initiate with a focus more on the nuts and bolts of zoning.

Purpose: At these meetings, our purpose should be to facilitate the formation of PC's, begin detailed discussions about zoning as a growth management tool, gather input from citizens regarding what zoning should and should not regulate and under what assumptions we should all be operating.

Goals: Formally establish Planning Committees, make clear the difference between phase one zoning (density, use, setbacks, height), and phase two zoning (more detailed regulation – cell towers, gravel pits, SOB's, for example). Gather initial impressions, thoughts, ideas, from citizenry regarding zoning.

Format: One or more rounds of half-day workshops on Saturdays, rounds of evening meetings or some combination of evening meetings and weekend workshops. More of a "bilateral" process – presenter driven introduction with subsequent shift to small group discussion. A series of "visioning" exercises should occur, which encourage attendees to think about the future and how to get there.

The zoning overview meetings shall:

1. Present the agenda
2. Recap Informational meetings and review where we are at in the overall process
3. Visioning exercises
 - a. Presentation
 - b. Discussion
4. Discuss in detail Planning Committees
 - a. Presentation
 - b. Invite people to join PC
5. Conduct a detailed zoning discussion
 - a. Overview of regulatory framework approach
 - b. Discuss potential regulatory framework
 - c. Receive feedback on this approach
6. Describe outputs
7. Describe steps, key deliverables, and timelines

Second phase proposed schedule

- 1st Zoning overview meeting: Florence - Saturday, March 24, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 2nd Zoning overview meeting: Lone Rock - Saturday, March 31, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 3rd Zoning overview meeting: Stevensville - Saturday, April 14, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 4th Zoning overview meeting: Victor - Saturday, April 21, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 5th Zoning overview meeting: Corvallis - Saturday, April 28, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 6th Zoning overview meeting: Hamilton - Saturday, May 5, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 7th Zoning overview meeting: Darby - Saturday, May 12, 2007 12:00 p.m.

Third round of meetings: How to assess the suitability of land for development (need a different and much more catchy title)

The third round of meetings will focus on data and how to evaluate the data to figure out where development occur to a greater or lesser extent.

Purpose: At these meetings, our purpose should be to continue to facilitate the formation of PC's, look at the types of data we have available, consider what types of situations should limit development (e.g. existence of physical limitations, lack of infrastructure, existence of treasured resources) and in what types of situations development should be encouraged (e.g. lack of physical limitations, availability of critical infrastructure or in an area where infrastructure should be extended, limited resource

value), continue detailed discussions about how the data should be used to guide development of the zoning map.

Goals: Gather feedback about importance different conditions (physical limitations, valued resources, availability of infrastructure, etc.) and how important different factors should be in analyzing where development is more or less suitable. Discuss how local communities can utilize this information in the creation of zoning maps.

Format: One or more rounds of half-day workshops on Saturdays, rounds of evening meetings or some combination of evening meetings and weekend workshops. More of a "bilateral" process – presenter-driven introduction with subsequent shift to small-group discussion. In addition to the maps in the presentation there will be a series of printed maps tailored to each planning area hung around the room.

The land suitability meetings shall:

1. Present the agenda
2. Recap past meetings and review where we are at in the overall process
3. Explain the role of the PC and what they are doing(?)
4. Presentation about suitability of land for development
5. Discussion
 - a. What types of conditions should drive or encourage development potential of property?
 - b. What types of conditions should limit development potential of property and to what extent?
 - c. What types of conditions are highly valued and development that might impact these conditions should be prohibited or highly limited at all costs?
 - d. How can information on these conditions be used by communities to develop a zoning map?
6. Receive feedback on this approach
7. Describe outputs
8. Describe steps, key deliverables, and timelines

Third round proposed schedule (is there any way we could divide up staff and volunteers to run 2nd round and 3rd round meetings simultaneously???):

- 1st Land suitability meeting: Florence - Saturday, April 21, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 2nd Land suitability meeting: Lone Rock - Saturday, April 28, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 3rd Land suitability meeting: Stevensville - Saturday, May 5, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 4th Land suitability meeting: Victor - Saturday, May 12, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 5th Land suitability meeting: Corvallis - Saturday, May 19, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 6th Land suitability meeting: Hamilton - Saturday, May 26, 2007 12:00 p.m.
- 7th Land suitability meeting: Darby - Saturday, June 2, 2007 12:00 p.m.

Development of the Process for Creating Zoning Maps

Staff, Planning Board Members, Planning Committees and consulting facilitators will work together to develop suggested methods community groups can use to create zoning maps for each planning area.

Suggested options to be considered:

Start listing out ideas as they come up – Ben Hillicoss provided an overview of one idea at the last public involvement meeting.

Create Zoning Maps

Describe public process framework for developing zoning maps

Formal Public Hearing and Adoption Process

Describe formal public hearing and adoption process in detail

Formal Release of the Countywide Zoning Proposal (map, regulations, growth policy amendments, etc.)

Collection of written comments

Planning Board Public Hearing(s)

Planning Board Deliberation and Recommendation (may include amendments that require time for preparation)

Release of Planning Board's Recommended Draft

Collection of written comments

BCC Public Hearing(s)

BCC Deliberation (may include amendments that require time for preparation – may also request Planning Board to review proposed amendments in additional hearings)

BCC Adoption of Resolution of Intent to Adopt Zoning Regulations and Map

Protest Period (30 days)

BCC Adoption of Resolution to Adopt Zoning Regulations and Map